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SUBJECT: GLOBAL CONTEXT SECTION OF THE QDDR

REF: A. A) STATE 120172  
B. B) ABUJA 02170

1. (U) Ref A requested input from the field regarding the global section of the QDDR. Mission Nigeria's answers pegged to Ref A para 4 follow:

A) TO WHAT DEGREE WILL/CAN TECHNOLOGY EMPOWER INDIVIDUALS, OR CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE HOST COUNTRY, TO EXERCISE A MORE ACTIVE ROLE IN PUBLIC LIFE?

In the short term, the degree is quite limited due to the severe infrastructure constraints in Nigeria, ranging from telecommunications to power. That said, the telecommunications market is rapidly expanding in Nigeria -- by some measures, the biggest in Africa -- and scheduled upgrades for bandwidth should improve and expand Internet access. In addition, many Nigerians, especially in urban areas, are IT and Internet savvy, and there is strong potential for growth in social networks and similar tools.

B) WHAT ATTITUDE DO CRITICAL PUBLICS IN THE HOST COUNTRY DISPLAY TOWARD THE SO-CALLED RISING POWERS -- INDIA, CHINA, AND BRAZIL -- AND HOW DO THEY PERCEIVE OTHER IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL PLAYERS, INCLUDING KEY INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS?

Nigeria has solid historical and significant commercial relationships with India and Brazil. There is a rapidly expanding Chinese presence in Nigeria, though Chinese efforts to secure major infrastructure contracts and become a major player in the Nigerian energy sector have basically come up short. Many Nigerians respect China for its economic development and rising international stature, but Ref B notes the serious reservations many Nigerian business entities have about China, particularly in the context of dissimilar corporate cultures and the difficulty of pursuing commercial or labor grievances with Chinese firms. Many Nigerians generally respect international organizations, but there are pockets of leftists in the south who retain traditional leftist suspicions of IFIs and of conservative Islamists largely in the north who are suspicious of Western influence. UN agencies are generally the most non-controversial in Nigeria.

C) WHAT DOES THE HOST COUNTRY IDENTIFY AS THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES (BOTH INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL) CRITICAL TO ITS OWN DEVELOPMENT AND TO INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT WRIT LARGE?

Injecting more transparency and accountability into the electoral process and the management of the energy and power sectors are generally cited as the country's top priorities. At the international level, there is broad but often shallow support for G-77 positions on development issues.

D) WHAT IS THE HOST COUNTRY POSITION ON CLIMATE CHANGE ISSUES, OR ON ANY RESOURCE CONFLICT QUESTIONS? WHAT STEPS

ARE THE HOST COUNTRY GOVERNMENT TAKING TO DEAL WITH POTENTIAL FUTURE DEMOGRAPHIC CHALLENGES?

The GON supports efforts to combat climate change and cites as one example of its commitment its plans to reduce widespread gas flaring in the Niger Delta and the efforts to develop a national action plan on protecting the environment.

The plan is in the draft stages. Nigeria's climate change position is integrated into the African position, which is that developing countries should compensate the developing countries for the alleged environmental damages caused by the developed world. In 2009, the government took a number of steps, including a successful amnesty program for Niger Delta militants and the start of a dialogue with community and Delta stakeholders, to end violence and extensive shut-in production in the country's main oil producing region. The ultimate success of these efforts to end militancy and violence, however, remains in doubt. The Nigerian government violence, however, remains in doubt. The Nigerian government has not taken effective steps to deal with its demographic challenges, which remain huge.

E) TO WHAT EXTENT DOES "BACKSLIDING" POSE A THREAT TO LOCAL DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT (OR TO WHAT DEGREE DOES THE COUNTRY PERCEIVE THIS AS A THREAT ELSEWHERE)?

Since the return of civilian rule in 1999, elections in Nigeria have progressively deteriorated in terms of fairness and credibility. Many observers believe that the 2011 presidential elections will not reverse this trend without major electoral reforms, such as separating the Independent National Election Commission from the executive branch of government. Thus far, the government has expressed support for several relatively minor reforms but has balked at implementing the key recommendations of an Electoral Reform Commission report issued in 2008. Nigerians generally take little notice of political developments or trends in the region, in part because they view Nigeria as the natural leader Africa. However, some politically sophisticated Nigerians are aware of and, to some extent, jealous of Ghana's recent electoral success and some, including President Yar'Adua, have taken a firm stance against the marginalization of democracy in Niger and Guinea.

SANDERS